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CURRENT EDUCATIONAL WRITINGS

I. REVIEW OF RECENT BOOKS IN SECONDARY-SCHOOL ENGLISH

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In the field of the teaching of English two books have appeared in 1917 which easily take the front rank. The first of these, *English Composition as a Social Problem*,¹ written by S. A. Leonard, of Horace Mann High School, grows out of his experience as a supervisor of elementary- and of secondary-school English. Leonard attacks the dry rot of extreme formalism in teaching English composition and places the constructive work of children and young people on the sound basis of real authorship, recognizing, of course, the limitations of immature minds. The second book of professional merit for high-school English teachers is Thomas' *The Teaching of English in the Secondary School*.² The distinctive feature of this book is the judicial balance preserved by the author between traditional and the innovating methods. Thomas realizes that no sudden and violent breaking away from conservative programs is advisable. But all through his discussion there are emphasized newer ideas such as: composition, a training in right thinking; the incidental value of correct mechanics in writing; co-operation in teaching; the newer attitudes toward outside reading, etc.

These two books are by far the best professional books of the year. They are thoroughly in keeping with all that is best in *The Reorganization of English in Secondary Schools*.³

CLAXTON, P. P., AND MCGINNIS, JAMES. *Effective English*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

The text is unique both in material and in arrangement. Throughout the book the authors have attempted to meet the cultural influence of the classics as well as the needs of business life. The former they accomplish largely

¹ STERLING A. LEONARD, *English Composition as a Social Problem*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.

² CHARLES SWAIN THOMAS, *The Teaching of English in the Secondary School*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.

³ *Reorganization of English in Secondary Schools*. By a committee of the National Education Association and of the National Council of Teachers of English, James F. Hosis, chairman. United States Bureau of Education, Bulletin, 1917, No. 2. \$0.20.

through the use of pictures. The text is profusely illustrated with such pictures as Tadema's "Reading from Homer" and Miller's "The Boyhood of Raleigh." Under a teacher of broad experience in art and literature, the pictures offer an unusual opportunity to emphasize the influence of the fine arts upon civilization. Half of each lesson-plan is vocational in intention. Drill concerns itself with rhetorical principles, and the lesson assignments bend the oral and written compositions toward a consideration of industry, of professions, and of business usage.

LEWIS AND HOSIC. *Practical English for High Schools*. New York: American Book Co.

Indicative of the modern spirit in teaching, *Practical English for High Schools* introduces, under a new garb, vital principles for pupils' oral and written expression, such as journalism and bibliography, the use of facsimile copies of letters, letterheads, etc. The tactful introduction of etymology, though not named as such, makes a strong appeal to a progressive teacher, as does also the way in which rhetorical matter and grammar review are included. Furthermore, instead of the stereotyped chapter headings—"Punctuation" and "Letter Writing," for example, the authors use such headings as "Helping the Eyes," and "Visiting by Mail," which are unique in their attraction for youths. Purposeful practice is given in every subject and illustrations are chosen from the standard authors that children are most likely to know. There is good judgment in the classification and reorganization of the subject-matter as a whole.

OPDYCKE, JOHN B. *Working Composition*. Boston: D. C. Heath & Co.

The aim of *Working Composition*, as stated by the author, is to connect composition with life and work and human experience. He has almost completely separated composition from the study of literature. The most suitable place in which this book could be used is a business college. The topics are, with a few exceptions, those which would appeal to boys alone. This book, in the hands of an efficient teacher, will suggest devices to arouse and maintain the interest of his class. The mass of material presented makes the textbook somewhat unwieldy.

HALL, J. LESSLIE. *English Usage*. Chicago: Scott, Foresman & Co.

If it is true that "long usage is the highest of linguistic authorities," Hall has made a real contribution in his book entitled *English Usage*. He covers a wide range of questionable expressions and sets before us references and examples both "pro" and "con." Even though decisions are given concerning very few of the expressions, the reader being left to his own judgment, value